

THE RIGHT'S WAR ON WOMEN AND ABORTION

Fighting back after Supreme Court overturns Roe v Wade >>Pages 6, 17 and 20

UKRAINE Spiralling into a more vicious war

No to Russia's invasion, no to Nato's escalation >>Page 6

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LET'S ALL BUILD ON RAIL BATTLE

STRIKE OUT THE TORIES



IMMIGRATION

Borders kill—dozens of migrants suffocated in Texas truck

THERE WAS horror on the US border as at least 46 people were found dead inside a tractor-trailer in San Antonio, Texas, on Monday.

The terrible discovery was made by a worker who heard cries for help coming from inside the trailer and found a pile of bodies inside.

In a desperate attempt to cross the border, migrants got onto a truck with no air conditioning and no water in the sweltering Texas heat.

A further 16 people, including four children, were taken to hospital



Border guards stop safe entry

after suffering heat stroke and heat exhaustion.

Democratic politician and candidate for governor of Texas Beto O'Rourke called for action to "dismantle human smuggling rings". But the blood is on the hands of the US state and its border controls.

The number of people attempting to cross the border irregularly has risen to the highest levels in more than a decade this year. Border forces said in March this year they expected 18,000 encounters with migrants a day.

While increasing numbers of migrants are risking their lives to get to the US, the options for

Strike reports, where next PLUS Labour's betrayal >>Pages 3, 4&5, 10&11, 14&15

>>continued on page 3



THE THINGS THEY SAY

'Historic victory for white life'

Republican congresswoman **Mary Miller** at an Illinois Trump rally on the US Supreme Court's decision to overturn Roe v Wade

'Passed immediately to one of the prince's charities'

A Palace spokesperson explains what Prince Charles did with a suitcase full of £1 million in cash given to him by the former prime minister of Qatar

'I think that actually people were fed up with hearing about things I had stuffed up, or allegedly stuffed up'

Boris Johnson explains why the Tories lost two by-election last week.

'I'm not sure that my friends in the City are finding it too difficult to jog along at the moment'

Jacob Rees-Mogg on the effect of the cost of living crisis

'A serious party of government does not join picket lines'

Labour MP **David Lammy**



Deeper in debt paying for the energy companies' failures

ALMOST A third of people who use buy now, pay later (BNPL) credit say repayments on the loans have become "unmanageable". The cost of living crisis has pushed them into a debt spiral, new research has found.

The social emergency of rising prices and falling benefits and wages in real terms means people are using these schemes more and more. People who use BNPL are now paying off an average of 4.8 purchases, almost double the 2.6 purchases in February, the research found.

BNPL lets people stagger payments for items such as clothes and furniture with no interest or charges—unless they can't pay back on time.



Debt trap

Firms then impose "late fees". It's a lesser-known scandal than the vicious interest rates that payday lenders push through.

Richard Lane, director of external affairs at the debt

charity StepChange, said, "There is rising evidence that BNPL isn't just being used to buy discretionary items like fashion, but also life's essentials, like groceries."

The multibillion-pound sector is dominated by firms such as Klarna, Clearpay and Laybuy. It's presently unregulated and new rules may not come in until 2024.

EVERYONE WHO pays a fuel bill faces a charge of £94 more a year each to cover the £2.7 billion cost of the failure of 28 privatised suppliers.

The National Audit Office (NAO) said last week that regulator Ofgem had allowed a market to develop that was vulnerable to large shocks.

The result of last year's shock was that 2.4 million customers were automatically moved to a rival company when their own supplier collapsed.

Typically, according to Citizens Advice, they had to pay an extra £30 a month for the duration of their original contract, as they were shifted to a more expensive tariff.

In addition, the cost of these failures totalled £2.7 billion which the firms foisted on to every bill payer in Britain.

This is before taking into account the potentially multi-billion charge that households could face due to the collapse of Bulb Energy, which is in special administration.

TORY MEDIA minister Nadine Dorries took a trip to Cornwall earlier this month. The train was late and she was looking at missing a connection. She asked staff onboard to call ahead to the connecting station to get them to hold the train back for her. But she was told that, no, that wouldn't be possible.

So she took matters into her own hands. She texted the transport secretary **Grant Shapps** to see if there was anything he could do to get her train held back instead. But he couldn't either.



Nadine Dorries

THE OUTGOING chief executive of the discount retailer **B&M** grabbed £5 million last year. **Simon Arora's** pay package rose by more than a third to 270 times that of the average B&M worker. This was despite flatlining profits and falling sales in the year to the end of March.

Arora, who leaves next year, booked a long term share bonus worth £2.6 million and an annual bonus of £1.5 million. That's on top of his "basic" salary of £810,000 before benefits such as a company car and pension payments.

Tories' vaccination lies

THE government has broken its promise to deliver 100 million surplus Covid vaccines to poor countries.

At a G7 meeting in June last year, **Boris Johnson** pledged to send the vaccines to developing countries within a year to help close the global vaccine gap and "vaccinate the world".

But a year later the government has delivered barely a third of the number of promised jabs, with just 36.5 million deployed as of the end of May.

Figures published by the government also show that ministers have effectively charged developing countries for the leftover jabs by deducting them



Not for the poor

from existing aid. They have even added a mark-up on Britain's original purchase price.

There is still a stark vaccine divide across the world, with just one in five Africans having received a single dose compared to 65 percent of all people worldwide.

Over £100 million was taken out of the British aid budget to cover the cost of the surplus coronavirus vaccines sent abroad.

Cashing in on the Hajj

SAUDI ARABIA has partially outsourced the Hajj pilgrimage process to a company with ties to India's far right ruling party and its leader **Narendra Modi**.

The Saudi government announced that potential Hajj pilgrims from Europe, the US and Australia will now need to apply for visas and permits for the pilgrimage via the online government portal **Motawif**.

The **Motawif** portal has at least one investor with close ties to India's ruling **BJP** party.

It has implemented anti-Muslim policies and plays a role in the persecution of Muslims throughout India.

According to a report by **Middle East Eye**, **Prashant Prakash**—vice president at venture capital firm **Accel India**—was a key investor in the company which the Saudi government hired to set up the new Hajj application system.

Last year **Prakash** became a policy and strategy adviser to **Basavaraj Bommai**, a key ally of prime minister **Modi** and the chief minister of the **BJP**-run government in the Indian state of **Karnataka**.

Accel India has also been a long-time investor in Israeli start-ups, reportedly having invested over £300 million into the country's industry.

Don't tax rich says Johnson

BORIS JOHNSON wants to hand billions to the mega-rich.

Allies of the prime minister said last week that **Johnson** is determined to stop next year's rise in corporation tax, announced by **Rishi Sunak** last year.

But any changes to the planned rise would leave the Treasury with a £15 billion-a-year black hole at a time when growth is stagnating.

One senior Conservative source told *The Times* newspaper that **Johnson** was prepared to have a "big fight" with **Sunak** over the issue.

Even with the rise, Britain would still have the lowest corporation tax rate of the advanced G7 economies.

Racist cop jailed

A former police constable has been jailed for 20 weeks after sending a string of racist WhatsApp memes, including images that mocked the death of **George Floyd**.

James Watts was serving with **West Mercia** police in 2020 when he shared the "grossly offensive" material in a group chat that included former colleagues at a **Warwickshire** prison.

After a police inquiry, **Watts** was found to have posted ten offensive memes in May and June 2020.

These included one featuring a white dog wearing **Ku Klux Klan** clothing and another showing a kneeling mat with **Floyd's** face printed on it.

A co-defendant, the **West Mercia** police constable **Joann Jinks**, is due to stand trial on 23 August charged with three counts of the same offence.

Cruising to the scrapyards

WHAT WAS meant to be one of the world's largest cruise ships is heading for its final destination, the scrapyards.

Global dream II, designed to hold more than 9,000 passengers, had almost been completed at a shipyard on Germany's **Baltic** coast.

But shipbuilder **MV Werften** filed for bankruptcy in January 2022 and the administrators cannot find a buyer.

Now the administrators wants the ship out of the yard—which it sold to **Thyssenkrupp's** naval unit. It plans to build military vessels there.

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'I want more strikes now,' says Network Rail worker

by SAM ORD

TENS OF thousands of rail workers that struck last week are looking ahead to what is next in their fight over pay, jobs and safety.

Their RMT union hadn't announced any more strike dates as *Socialist Worker* went to press. Delay risks losing momentum in the fight, and allowing the bosses to recover.

Network Rail worker, Dan from Coventry told *Socialist Worker*, "I'd like to see more strikes announced."

"RMT senior assistant general secretary Eddie Dempsey talked to rail engineers online and didn't give a clear answer. A lot of people in the chat were calling for more strikes and action."

The bosses have shown that they will not roll over after just three days of walkouts.

And the strikes shouldn't be used as a bargaining chip in negotiations for watered down deals that are far short of what's required.

In media appearances, RMT general secretary Mick Lynch is focussing increasingly on stopping compulsory redundancies, and suggests he may settle for a 7 percent pay increase.

Cut

With inflation now near 12 percent, that would mean accepting a real terms pay cut of nearly 5 percent. A deal avoiding compulsory redundancies may also mean accepting thousands of voluntary ones.

The strength of last week's action—and the support it won—showed the rail workers have the power to win much more.

They can demand a pay rise of at least 12 percent, and no redundancies at all. But to win that, they need to demand more, sustained action.



WORKERS STRUCK across Britain last week, such as these RMT members in Manchester

PICTURE: MIKE KILLIAN

BACK STORY

Workers at Network Rail and 13 train operating companies struck on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday of last week

- The strike became a focus for many working class people's anger at the Tories and the cost of living crisis.

- Hundreds of people joined RMT union picket lines across Britain on all three strike days

- And they joined rallies in cities including Liverpool, Glasgow, Bristol and Manchester

Dan said, "When we have the movement supporting us, we want to keep momentum going. We have our annual general meeting next week—we could call for more strikes there."

He added that the solidarity from other workers and trade unions was also important—even as the Labour Party turned its back on strikers (see page 4).

"Keep coming to solidarity rallies and the picket lines," he said. "People from the public, not in a trade union, donated £60,000 to the strike fund last week."

A win for the rail workers would be a blow not just to rail bosses,

but every boss that wants to drive down wages, and the Tories who back them. Tory transport secretary Grant Shapps has tried desperately to undermine the strike.

He accused workers of trying to "defend indefensible working practices," then suggested the strike had no impact.

In reality, the Tories are rattled. Victory for the rail strikers would show every other worker that striking can win.

What's your story?

Email with your ideas
reports@socialistworker.co.uk

Scab labour is dangerous

AS THE Tories talk about using scab agency workers to cover for rail strikers, there's already terrifying evidence of how this risks catastrophic crashes.

On the first strike day, Tuesday, stand-in staff sent multiple trains in the wrong direction. Others told trains to leave stations when signals were on red. These could have caused deaths.

There were reports of managers trying to dispatch a train against a red signal. That led to the managers reportedly tested for alcohol and drugs as a result.

Chillingly, when unveiling its scab worker proposals, the Tory government said, "Skilled temporary workers would be

able to fill vacant positions such as train dispatchers". It acknowledged they "perform vital tasks such as giving train drivers the signal they are safe to proceed and making sure train doors aren't obstructed".

"During strikes, that role has had to be carried out by train managers," it said. "They could have been used in more safety critical roles, such as guards."

It's a recipe for unsafe working. The rail workers are rightly fighting for their own pay and jobs. But they are also confronting a Tory government and a management that will take risks to break a strike.

Read more at bit.ly/SWonSafety

Border law massacres migrants

>>Continued from page 1

safe routes across the border are basically non-existent.

Despite the promises president Joe Biden made during his election campaign, immigration policy has changed little since the presidency of Donald Trump.

The public health order known as Title 42, which the Trump administration first used to expel migrants, is still in use.

The order sends migrants back with no chance to apply for asylum. Often this leads to migrants repeatedly making attempts to cross the border.

During Biden's presidency, this policy has turned away at least a million people.

The policy director at the American Immigration Council, Aaron Reichlin-Melnick wrote, said policies like these only result in tragedy.

Pushed

"With the border shut as tightly as it is today for migrants from Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador, people have been pushed into more and more dangerous routes," he posted on Twitter. "Truck smuggling is way up."

In just one year ending last September, US Customs and Border Protection reported 557 deaths on the southwest border alone.

The actual number is likely to be even higher.

US border controls kill hundreds, if not thousands, a year.

The same horror for refugees and migrants repeats itself worldwide.

There were furious protests after Moroccan security forces, working with the Spanish National Police and the Civil Guard, massacred at least 37 people in Melilla in north Africa (see page 8).

In Britain the Tories are still pushing their deadly scheme to send refugees to Rwanda.

On 19 July Care4Calais and the PCS union will be in court, fighting to make the Rwanda deportation plan unlawful. The battle inside the courts must come alongside furious demonstrations outside of it. Border controls kill.

Demonstrate, Tue 19 July, 9am onwards, rally 1-2pm, Royal Courts of Justice, Strand, London WC2A 2LL. For details go to bit.ly/Rwanda19July

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Potential for a new wave of strikes to beat bosses

THE RAIL strikes have added fresh fuel to the push for pay fights by many other workers.

Teachers, NHS workers, airport check-in staff, telecoms, civil service and postal workers are just some of those who could soon launch their own pay strikes.

A ballot of telecoms workers in BT group—made up of BT, Openreach and EE—was set to end on Thursday of this week.

They are furious after bosses imposed a pay increase of £1,500 without any agreement from the union. For every worker, that's a real terms pay cut.

The workers' CWU union says that, if the action goes ahead, it would be the first national strike across all of BT since 1987.

CWU rep Eugene Caparros told Socialist Worker that the rail strikes had galvanised the campaign to win the ballot.

"It started with the rail workers, but this is going to spread because the pressures are the same for all workers," he said.

"Lots of our members were always up for a fight," he added.

"But now they realise it's a fight they could win. We're only emboldened by what we see with other trade unions taking up the fight.

"The rail workers have certainly given us all a bit more hope."

Bosses

Postal workers in Royal Mail also began balloting for strikes on Tuesday of this week after their bosses pulled a similar move.

Bosses imposed a below-inflation 2 percent "increase" earlier in June and also want to push through attacks on conditions.

CWU rep Adam Cochrane said, after visiting rail workers' picket lines last week, that the campaign to build a Yes vote was "the easiest work I've ever done."

Even criminal barristers are fighting over pay—with members of the Criminal Bar Association striking for two days on Monday and Tuesday of this week.

Barristers struck and picketed over legal aid funding. They spoke

BACK STORY

All workers should fight for an above inflation pay rise

● Prices are now rising at an average of 11.7 percent a year according to the most accurate measure of inflation, the RPI index

Figures last week from XpertHR showed annual average pay growth stalled at 4 percent

That means workers are seeing almost an 8 percent cut in their pay

The most effective form of action will be strikes and mass demos

of being paid less than the minimum wage for court hearings when travel and hours spent preparing are factored in. And they said they're not paid at all when hearings are cancelled.

And more strikes are in the pipeline.

Consultative

The NEU school workers' union has said it will launch a consultative ballot asking its members if they'd be ready to strike over pay—and encouraging them to vote yes.

It says it could follow this up with a real strike ballot.

Civil service workers in the PCS union look set to begin their own strike ballot over pay in September.

And NHS workers will again be told their annual pay rise will be less than inflation of between 4 and 5 percent—a massive real terms pay cut (see story, right).

Long-standing nurse and Unison union activist Janet Maiden told Socialist Worker the mood around pay has become more militant as the cost of living crisis bites.

"Lots of people watched last week's rail strike on TV and said, maybe we should be more like them. Some have gone further, saying, we should be out too."

More on line

For up to the minute strike news go to socialistworker.co.uk



A BARRISTERS' strike rally in central London on Monday. The chair of the Criminal Bar Association, Jo Sidhu QC, told strikers they were "engulfed in a crisis of epic proportions" (see report page 19)

Labour leadership doubles down on opposition to workers fighting low pay

LABOUR' LEADERSHIP has doubled down on its opposition to workers fighting over pay.

Shadow foreign secretary David Lammy insisted on Sunday a "serious party of government" wouldn't support airport workers' strikes against a pay cut.

British Airways workers have voted to strike to reverse a 10 percent pay cut imposed during the pandemic.

But, when asked by the BBC if he supported the strikes, Lammy replied, "No, I don't. It's a no. It's a categorical no."

Lammy suggested that the party's chief whip—who enforces the leaders' rulings—would discipline those who defied Starmer to join picket lines anyway.

It underlines that it's no good waiting for a Labour government to deliver real pay rises for workers.

Labour politicians like to argue that the only way to get lasting change is to elect a Labour government. But in practice that



Shadow foreign secretary David Lammy

often means arguing against strikes and protests in order to prove Labour is "a serious party of government"—which union leaders sometimes go along with.

And it also means they promise to deliver far less than what workers need. Lammy said that rather than fighting for workers' pay rises, Labour would only offer compromises with bosses. "Many of us might want a rise of 10 percent," Lammy

said. "In truth, most people understand it's unlikely that you're going to get that."

That was because, "the business of being in government is that you support negotiation."

Last week, Labour also hinted it would go along with yet another year of pay cuts for NHS workers.

Labour's weakness has put it at odds with even some of the union leaders who fund the party.

Unite union general secretary Sharon Graham said Lammy's refusal to support workers at Heathrow was "A new low for Labour and once again shows that politicians have failed."

"It is now down to the trade unions to defend working people," she said. "We are their only voice."

The way to prove that is to call and organise the strikes to deliver the pay rises Labour won't support.

Why won't Labour back strikes? See pages 14&15

Tory crisis deepens after twin by-election losses

IT WAS the result Boris Johnson was dreading, but it was the result he got nonetheless. Last week, the Tories lost both by-elections in the seats of Wakefield and Tiverton and Honiton.

In Devon, the Lib Dems were celebrating after smashing a Tory majority of 24,000.

Helen Hurford, the humiliated Tory candidate arrived at the count, but hid in the room of a leisure centre and refused to speak to reporters.

It was the first time the Tories had ever been defeated in the constituency.

And in West Yorkshire, Labour candidate Simon Lightwood presided over a 12 percent swing from Conservatives to Labour.

Pressure is mounting on Johnson to resign, and members of his own party are among the loudest voices calling for him to go.

Party chair Olive Dowden stood down after "the latest in a run of very poor results in our party".

"We cannot carry on with business as usual", he declared. Yet so far Johnson is standing firm—just about.

Under current rules, Tory MPs can't force another leadership vote on him for a year.

But angry backbench MPs are seeking election to the powerful

1922 committee, so they can make it easier to challenge his leadership.

The explanation for the results doesn't simply lie in a widespread and deep mistrust of Johnson's government.

It's extremely likely that top bods from the Labour and Lib Dems agreed to tactically withdraw their forces from one constituency, making each more likely to secure victory in the other.

This taps into the feeling in places such as Devon that only the Lib Dems can oust the Tories in elections.

Deposit

Labour didn't campaign heavily in Tiverton and Honiton and polled so poorly it lost its deposit.

For the Lib Dems, it was an identical picture in Wakefield. But such electoral pacts aren't helpful.

The Lib Dems are through and through a party of austerity, having been in coalition with the Tories' brutal regime of 2010-2015.

And Keir Starmer's Labour party needs to take on the Tories over the cost of living crisis.

Being drawn into electoral pacts with the Lib Dems is a distraction that pulls the party further to the right and away from the kind of confrontation that can beat Johnson.

NHS workers across Britain face yet more cuts in pay

HUNDREDS of thousands of health workers will again be told their annual NHS pay rise will be well below inflation.

That's the shocking conclusion of the NHS Pay Review Body (PRB), whose findings were leaked at the end of last week.

Sources say the PRB will likely recommend health workers in England and Wales get an increase of between 4 and 5 percent—a massive real terms pay cut.

The Scottish government earlier this month offered a paltry 5 percent rise—and the Unison union is holding a ballot to reject it.

Unison union activist and nurse



Janet Maiden

Janet Maiden said that activists must begin organising urgently.

"The people I work with, mainly experienced nurses, are becoming desperate and angry," she told Socialist Worker.

"Many of them are on higher pay grades, and have been around for a long time, so are at the top of the increment scale."

"But even they say

they are running out of money before the end of the month."

Janet says that health unions will need to work hard to convince their members they are serious about fighting this time.

"We need to get the best people from every hospital and facility in the city in a room together, regardless of what their position in the union is," she says.

"And we need to prime them with a strategy and give them the resources they need.

"That's how we used to do it in the past—and it worked."

It's vital activists don't allow union leaders to throw away this chance to fight back.

Socialist Worker
WHAT WE THINK

50 YEARS OF PRIDE—FLY RED FLAG WITH RAINBOW

IT'S 50 years since the first London Pride march, the first of its kind in Britain. Some 2,000 people attended in 1972, organised by the Gay Liberation Front.

It was not supported by the state, much less by brands and companies.

Pride was a defiant stand against rampant oppression and a deliberate effort to continue the Stonewall riots' radical legacy of fighting for LGBT+ rights.

In 2019, over 1.5 million people celebrated London Pride, and it's still a day of rejecting oppression and claiming LGBT+ existence.

Not only has attendance skyrocketed, but there are now Prides in cities and small towns across Britain. Defiant campaigns and broader struggle has shifted attitudes towards LGBT+ people. In 1972 the age of consent for gay men was 21. It became 16 in 2000.

Civil partnerships were legalised in 2004, followed by same sex marriage in 2014. Transgender people were given some rights under the 2004 Gender Recognition Act (GRA).

But alongside this, the last 50 years have produced state pushbacks that hit LGBT+ people. Section 28 in 1988 banned

discussion of homosexuality or gender fluidity in schools.

The AIDS crisis led to the victimisation of gay men while thousands died. Today more than 25 percent of homeless people are LGBT+. And a huge clampdown from the Tories on trans people has stifled liberation.

Positive reforms to the GRA have been scrapped, and the Tories' ban on conversion therapy excluded transgender people.

Pride season has the ability to mobilise huge masses, giving LGBT+ people a space to gain a sense of liberation.

It's important that New York City's pride last weekend was led by Planned Parenthood in the wake of attacks on abortion

A huge clampdown from the Tories on trans people has stifled liberation

WEST'S PRO-WAR HYPOCRITES

DTHE RUSSIAN missile that slammed into a crowded shopping centre in the city of Kremenchuk on Monday adds to a long list of appalling murders in the Ukraine war.

At least 16 people died and scores more were injured. Ukrainian government officials described the attack as an "act of terrorism" against civilians.

The attack underlines the reactionary nature of Vladimir Putin's invasion. But it should not be used to escalate the war further. No doubt it will be seized

on by Boris Johnson and other warmongers at this week's Nato summit. They will likely demand more weapons and a further acceleration of the supply of death-dealing technology to Ukraine.

All the Western denunciations are based on hypocrisy.

In decades of forever wars the US and its allies, with Britain on the frontline, have committed countless atrocities.

They have mown down civilians, massacred wedding parties, fired on hospitals from helicopters and obliterated entire towns. At the

end of last year, the New York Times detailed how in Iraq and Afghanistan the US military had embraced the deliberate killing of children. They were expendable when a supposed military target was deemed more important than their lives.

The blood-soaked supporters of Western imperialism will use Putin's assaults to worsen the killing.

Instead there needs to be a stronger movement to say no to the invasion but also no to Nato escalation.

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ANALYSIS

ALEX CALLINICOS



Our side must be as ruthless as enemies

THE DECISION by the Supreme Court of the United States to suppress the constitutional right to abortion recognised in the 1973 Roe vs Wade case is more than a vicious attack on women's freedom. It's yet another sign of the different times we are now living in.

We can see this at various levels. First, there is the how of the decision. The right in the US have been working for this for decades.

One of the many ways in which the US is less than a full democracy is that constitutional law is made, not by elected representatives, but by the nine “justices” of the Supreme Court, appointed for life by the president. So the right worked to remake the court.

The liberal historian Tim Snyder argues the Republicans are “a coalition of two types of people—those who would game the system... and those who dream of breaking it”.

Mitch McConnell, Republican leader in the US Senate, and Mike Pence, Donald Trump's vice president, are gamers. Trump and his followers are breakers.

They worked together to take over the Supreme Court. McConnell sabotaged Barack Obama's typically feeble attempt to fill a vacancy in the court towards the end of his presidency. He helped Trump appoint three ultra-conservative judges. All Trump's nominees, when they were seeking confirmation from the Senate, lied solidly, swearing they would respect “precedent”.

The Republican right now have five out of nine votes on the Supreme Court, which they have used decisively. This is an example of the ruthlessness with which both gamers and breakers operate. They have, for example, implemented gerrymandering and voter suppression at the state level to entrench Republican control.

By comparison, the Democrats are feeble, whining about their opponents' refusal to respect the rules of the game.

Opinion

Secondly, this is only the beginning. Clarence Thomas—the longest serving right wing judge—filed a concurring opinion in which he said the court should reopen other precedents.

He named three cases which upheld the right to contraception, same-sex intercourse and same-sex marriages.

Thomas, whose wife is under investigation for her support for the far right assault on the US Capitol on 6 January 2021, was announcing a counter-revolution.

Between the 1950s and the 1970s the Supreme Court made a series of judgements that extended individual liberties. Like the cases supporting black people's demands for real equality, Roe v Wade was an attempt to accommodate the pressures from the huge mass movements for emancipation that were sweeping the world.

These victories survived into the neoliberal era. From the 1980s onwards, governments championed economic liberalism, which swept away obstacles to capital making profits. But they also respected, and sometimes extended, what is sometimes called social liberalism—that is, individual freedom in people's private lives.

Big corporations and banks were happy to pay lip service to the values of equality and diversity, even while they were widening real economic inequality.

The Global Financial Crisis of 2007-9 blew this contradiction apart. The suffering it caused unleashed the discontent that had been building up over the previous 30 years.

This gave an opening to the breakers—not just Trump but the far right that we have seen advancing in Europe and indeed on a world scale. The breakers want to reverse the limited steps towards a genuinely emancipated society that were made thanks to the movements of the 1960s and 1970s. And they have plenty of enablers.

Liberal opinion in the US has lionised Pence because he refused to do Trump's will on 6 January and overturn Joe Biden's election.

The Supreme Court decision leaves it up to states to decide to allow or proscribe abortion. But Pence is calling for a national ban on abortion.

This assault can be halted and reversed only by the most determined and massive movement that is ready to be as ruthless as its opponents.

NATO SECRETARY general Jens Stoltenberg had an agenda for more militarism at this week's Nato summit

G7 and Nato summits will see Ukraine war escalate

by SOPHIE SQUIRE

THE WAR in Ukraine has settled into a murderous and grinding conflict that will cause massive human destruction and could set the scene for further horrors.

The warmongers had a packed schedule this week, with the G7 and the Nato summit happening within a few days of each other.

The Nato conference, which was set to begin on Tuesday, will see the nuclear-based military alliance discuss how best to escalate war with Russia over the invasion of Ukraine.

Leaders are poised to put in place a renewed key Strategic Concept document at the conference. This will outline Nato's future objectives.

It will see an aggressive plan to expand Nato's military backing for its eastern European allies.

It will include a new pledge that Nato's allies including Britain would deploy ships, warplanes and troops to specific territories if the US and its allies believe it's necessary.

Russia would be designated as “the most direct and immediate threat to our security” according to Nato secretary general Jens Stoltenberg.

The summit will also see pressure on Turkish leader Tayyip Erdogan to lift his veto

over Finland and Sweden's bid to join the alliance. That would clear the way for a major Nato extension.

The Nato summit will build on decisions and promises made last weekend at the G7 conference of wealthier nations.

Leaders there reasserted that they were “unified” in their opposition to Russia.

The group also continued plans to ramp up the economic war on Russia. Several of the G7 group moved to ban all imports of Russian gold and tighten sanctions.

Last week the Baltic state of Lithuania, a Nato member, blocked the transport of many

goods, including steel and coal, to the Russian territory of Kaliningrad. It is separated from the rest of Russia by Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

The secretary of Russia's Security Council, Nikolai Patrushev, said, “Russia will definitely respond to such hostile actions. Their consequences will have a significant negative impact on the population of Lithuania.”

The G7 and Nato councils of war come as the New York Times says United States CIA officers are already in Ukraine to pass information to Ukrainian officials.

And special operations forces from several countries, including Britain, are training Ukrainian troops near the battlefield.

The Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky was set to ask for more arms for the country's military at the Nato summit.

As Western leaders discussed how to escalate the conflict, Russia continued its assault on Ukraine.

For the first time in three weeks, Russian military forces fired missiles at the capital, Kiev. Russia also announced it will send nuclear-capable missile systems to its ally Belarus.

President Vladimir Putin said Iskander-M systems “can fire ballistic and cruise missiles, both conventional and nuclear types”. The systems have a range of up to 310 miles.

Iskander-M ballistic missiles

Anti-war protests rage

PROTESTS raged against the Nato conference in Madrid, Spain, as part of an international day of action last weekend. Thousands marched with banners saying “Neither Putin nor Nato”.

Fearful of protests, the Spanish state banned a further demonstration on Wednesday as the conference was set to start.

Anti-war campaigners participated in the

international day of action across Britain, organised by the Stop The War Coalition.

Around 100 protesters joined a demonstration in London and 25 in Glasgow.

Rallies and campaigning stalls also took place in other towns and cities, including Brighton, Manchester and Hull.

It's vital to keep building a movement that can stop our rulers' drive for escalation.

Rolls-Royce leak plan backfired, says union

by ISABEL RINGROSE

ENGINEERS AT Rolls-Royce are furious at bosses for “stabbing the workforce in the back” in a dispute over pay.

The Unite union has been in discussions with the firm for months. But Rolls-Royce last week leaked negotiations to the press.

Their offer, which shop stewards’ committees have rejected, is a one-off payment of £2,000 and a 4 percent pay rise backdated to March.

Rolls-Royce hoped to use the leak to paint itself as a benevolent employer helping its workers.

Some 3,000 junior managers would receive the cash in August. The 11,000 Unite union members, the majority of who make engines and parts, only get theirs if the union concedes.

But Jed Ellis, shop steward at the Rolls-Royce site in Bristol and member of Unite’s South West Regional Industrial Sector Committee for Aerospace and Shipbuilding, said workers are “livid”.

“Bosses have dragged this out as long as possible,” he told Socialist Worker. “They’re toying around with the union, trying to undermine us.

“They’re praising themselves, but the offer was not agreed with the union—and, the company sent out letters to employees’ homes about it.

“Workers in Bristol are livid.”

Bristol is part of a collective bargaining group that pulls together sites in Ansty, Barnoldswick, Inchinnan, Rotherham and Washington.

Dispute

The Derby Works Combine, consisting of thousands of workers, is also involved in the dispute, as well as two other groups that include some GMB union members.

The workers want an 8.87 percent pay rise—a claim made when RPI inflation was at 5.5 percent.

As inflation soars, workers will hope to make up the difference in the 2023 pay claim to avoid losing out.

In Bristol, the union called an emergency meeting last week with some 700 members, across three shifts raising their hands to signal agreement to a fightback. They chanted, “Eight or the gate”.

During the height of the pandemic, Rolls-Royce workers made ventilators for the NHS. But they’ve had no pay rise in two years.

“We played a critical role throughout the entire pandemic,” Jed explained.

“Last year we even agreed to give 10 percent of our wages to the company, which we got back, to help them out. We’ve been repaid by them leaking negative news to the press.

“This is how they decide to treat their own workforce? They’re just money grabbers.”

Jed thinks that the negative press is an attempt “to split the workforce”.

“They’re scared,” he said. “They can’t afford a strike. We also have a new HR team which has never dealt with anything like this before.

“Rolls-Royce is also trying to sell the offer as a 9 percent pay rise. That’s misleading—they want to turn the public’s perception.

“There’s no reason to leak—apart from trying to divide, scare and intimidate. It’s bullying tactics.”

Bonus

As the cost of living crisis spirals, Rolls-Royce knows that a payout of £2,000 will be tempting for some struggling workers.

However, they should remember that Rolls-Royce chief Warren East grabbed a £4 million pay package in 2021, including a £3 million bonus.

Unite officials are now trying to salvage a deal with bosses after a failure to agree was announced. Failing this, Jed says, the only option is to strike.

“There is a real sense of collectiveness—we’re not frightened. We’re not going to bend over backwards, and won’t be willing to have a union officer come in and make a deal for less than 8 percent.

“We’ve been in these talks for months. We’ve tried to negotiate with the company and have listened to all their excuses.

“It’s not on and we’re not prepared to listen anymore.

“It’s stressful, but we’re in a good position and this workforce is powerful.”

With class struggle on the rise, the prospect of thousands of aerospace workers walking out shows a growing appetite for resistance.

ROLLS ROYCE engineers have huge potential power to stop bosses’ profits

Striking Arriva bus workers expect reinforcements from north west

STRIKING BUS Arriva workers in West Yorkshire remain strong as they enter their fourth week of all out strike.

The 650 members of Unite walked out after rejecting a 4.1 percent pay offer.

And, they have remained on the picket lines after rejecting an offer of between 8 and 12 percent, depending on their grade.

With inflation at 11.7 percent, workers are right to reject what for most would be a real terms pay cut.

New bus drivers at Arriva Yorkshire are paid just 29 pence above minimum wage.

That rises to just £12.15 after three years.

Negotiations remain on hold as workers refuse to back down.

Many areas, including Wakefield, have strong picket lines with over 50 strikers on them.

They have received support from other unions, such as the Bfawu bakers’ union and the teachers’ NEU.

The strike involves all Arriva



Striking in West Yorkshire

workers, including engineers and drivers, and has also hit depots in Castleford, Dewsbury, Heckmondwike and Selby.

Arriva bosses say, “We continue to take all responsible steps to find a way to resolve this strike”.

The most “responsible” step would be to give an above inflation pay deal.

This is not an unrealistic demand, Arriva’s parent company—DB Group—increased its profits by over 18 percent in 2021 to more than £40 billion.

It also grabbed large Covid subsidies from the government.

Arriva Yorkshire strikers are now looking forward to joining with around 1,800 colleagues from across the north west of England.

The north west drivers have begun a strike ballot after also rejecting a low pay offer.

Unite regional officer Phil Bown, said, “I’ve got bus drivers here who are working 40 to 50 hours a week and can’t afford to live.

“Some of them are going to food banks to subsidise their income.”

Both sets of strikers should be wary of a negotiated settlement that is far below what is needed to match the rising cost of living.

That’s what happened at Arriva London South where after three days of strikes, the dispute was settled with a pay rise of just 3.5 percent and a one-off payment of £250.

Keeping up the strikes and spreading them to involve more workers is the best way to win. **Sam Ord**



Rage across Spain as cops beat migrants to death in Melilla

by CHARLIE KIMBER

PROTESTS ERUPTED across Spain last Sunday evening after the mass killing of at least 37 migrants.

They died last Friday trying to enter the Spanish enclave of Melilla in north Africa—a colonial legacy—that borders Morocco.

Anti-racists held angry mobilisations in cities including Barcelona, Madrid, Valencia, Bilbao, Seville, Granada, Cadiz, Mataro and Zaragoza.

Many more are planned for Monday and Tuesday of this week.

Moroccan security forces, acting in alliance with the Spanish National Police and the Civil Guard, crossed the barrier between Morocco and Melilla.

They hit, beat to death and drove back migrants who had managed to break through to Melilla.

This is the price of the European Union's border regime—bloodied and pummelled corpses of desperate people.

Melilla and Ceuta, Spain's other North African enclave, have the European Union's only land borders on the African continent.

Spain and Morocco seal the border with ten-metre iron fences, barbed wire, watchtowers and brutal repression.

A video and several photographs featured on the Publico website show assaults on 500 people who had reached the fences and 133 who managed to cross.

Surrounded

The migrants had organised themselves and launched a planned and defiant attempt to breach the border.

But then came the states' response. "The migrants who managed to cross were surrounded by the Spanish Police and the Civil Guard, who pushed them towards the Moroccan side," said photo-journalist Javier Bernardo. "Some managed to break free and run further into Melilla."

He added that he was surprised to see Moroccan forces openly working in Spanish territory—normally strictly forbidden.

Spain's president Pedro Sanchez from the PSOE, the equivalent of the Labour Party, paid homage to the work of the Moroccan forces.

He described the migrants' attempts to find safety and escape poverty as an attack on Spain's "territorial integrity".

Sanchez peddled the disgusting evasions of all ruling classes. He said, "If anyone is responsible for everything that happened at the border, it is the mafias that traffic in human beings." In fact, these traffickers gain from the borders

and laws that stop migrants. And it is the violence of the Spanish and Moroccan states that are so deadly.

Jesús Melillero, a member of the Marx21 socialist group in Melilla, said, "The Spanish government, which calls itself progressive, has applauded in the declarations of Pedro Sanchez, a massacre which is the product of the EU's migration policies."

Indignation

"Despite the indignation of many people in the city, this Spanish semi-enclave in Morocco has tried to maintain normality, as if dozens of people had not been murdered here in cold blood."

The previously radical Podemos party is in government with the PSOE. Its spokesperson Idoia Villanueva called only for the imposition of "international law".

Moroccan authorities only officially recognised the deaths of 23 people who were suffocated or crushed near the Moroccan fence.

As hunger and poverty grow, there will be more migrants and refugees.

The battle continues to overthrow the border regimes of Britain and the European Union.



On other pages...

Why won't Labour back strikes?
>>Pages 14&15

Protests in Ecuador push back hated government

PROTESTERS IN Ecuador in South America are showing that it's possible to win concessions during a cost of living crisis.

Furious protests that have raged since the middle of June have forced the state to cut the price of gas. The right wing president Guillermo Lasso announced last Sunday that the price of gasoline and diesel would be cut by 10 cents.

Protests have been mainly led by the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador (Conaie). Through a campaign of blocking roads, protesters severely interrupted food and fuel supplies across the country.

Last Sunday the energy minister announced that oil production would be forced to stop within 48 hours if the road blocks and vandalism of fossil fuel infrastructure continued.

Sonia Guamangate, an Indigenous woman from Samanga in the Cotopaxi region, joined tens of thousands of protesters marching to the capital of Quito from rural areas.

"The prices have risen in the city, but what we get paid for our agricultural products remains the same" she said.

"Sometimes they are paying as little as \$5 or \$6 for 100 kilograms of potatoes. That's a year's work for some of us."

"They call us ignorant Indians. We are not ignorant. We supply the food for the city."

There were also moves to impeach Lasso this week, with talks over whether he should be ousted set to continue.

The protests are an impressive show, but the 10 percent drop in fuel prices falls short of the 30 to 35 cent reduction Conaie initially demanded.

Protesters must stay on the streets and continue to block roads to hit back at the rising cost of food and fuel, as well as the government.

West ignores Afghanistan earthquake

YEARS OF war, occupation and punishment by Western governments have left ordinary people in Afghanistan suffering after an earthquake last week.

As many as 1,000 people died in the earthquake in the south-eastern Paktika province on Wednesday of last week, where a majority of homes were completely destroyed. People living in some of the province's villages had still received no aid more than a week later.

The earthquake comes after Western governments cut off funding to the aid-dependent country and froze its assets after the Taliban overthrew their 20-year-long military occupation last year.

The US government is withholding nearly £6 billion of Afghan reserves.

But even before then, Afghan emergency response services were stretched under the corrupt, Western-backed government.

'Join the pickets,' say XR activists

I'M A member of Extinction Rebellion (XR) and I attended RMT union picket lines at Rickmansworth railway station, in west London, last week.

We were interested in how strikers would receive us. Unfortunately there hasn't always been an understanding within XR about the importance of workers in the movement.

Often in XR we talk about how we can bring the system down, but there's not always an understanding that workers have the power to do that.

Of the three members of our group, two of us are trade unionists, myself included. One of us had never been in a trade union.

I think this person's opinion was changed when they talked to the strikers.

Instead of thinking that we were there as XR to convince people there is a climate emergency, they came away with a greater sense that our struggles are linked.

Strikers agreed that we need to incentivise people to use public transport, that we need more local stations and that destructive projects like HS2 aren't the answer.

Those on the picket line really appreciated us being there, and we left with a renewed sense of hope for greater unity.

Seeing XR groups across Britain on picket lines was really great. It feels like people are finally starting to join the dots.

Jenny Cooper
XR Brent



ILLUSTRATION: TIM SANDERS

Police and council to blame for ignoring abuse of children

THE FAILINGS of the police and council in Oldham left a huge number of young people vulnerable to Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE).

This is the conclusion of yet another review of a public body which has utterly failed in its duty of care.

Oldham is the latest borough following Rotherham, Rochdale and Oxford to be condemned by an independent review. The report notes that there were multiple incidences where CSE was reported.

But officers and the police failed to adhere to procedures which would have protected young people.

It also notes how the police failed to inform the council of allegations of child sexual abuse

by the ringleader of a grooming network.

This person was then able to gain employment at the council as a welfare rights officer and was later convicted of 30 child rape offences. Both the police and the council were further found to have avoided giving evidence to the select committee.

While the report states that there was no attempt to cover up the scale of CSE in the borough completely, the extent of the abuse was downplayed to maintain the council's reputation.

The police prioritised this well above the welfare of children.

It is clear, as in all the findings of the independent reviews of all these councils and police forces,

that the welfare of these vulnerable young people was never a priority.

Instead those in charge made a choice not to care. The patterns of abuse were known and evidenced over and over.

Victims were blamed and seen as complicit in their own exploitation. The suffering of victims, some as young as 11 years old, was treated with contempt.

This is yet another example of the police lining up with corrupt and incompetent officials.

It is only for the bravery of the survivors in coming forward that their negligence is being exposed today.

Jill Adams
Rotherham

Migrants are scared to access vital treatment

AT A recent Filipino cultural event in Waltham Forest, east London, the organisers arranged for the local hospital diabetes team to offer free checks.

This is important because, despite no British data, research from the US shows the risk of developing type two diabetes is 2.5 times higher for Filipino American adults compared to white adults in the US.

About 100 people received checks during the day. Many had not been

seen by a GP or other health professional in years, even decades.

The NHS's hostile environment is deterring people without status from seeking vital treatment, even though they are entitled to it.

With the Tory government doubling down on policies that scapegoat migrants and refugees, it's up to health workers and unions to defend health care for all.

Jim Fagan
East London

Stand against attacks on MP Begum

SUPPORTERS of Palestinian rights must affirm our support for Labour's Poplar and Limehouse MP Apsana Begum.

Begum, who is the first Muslim woman who wears a headscarf to become an MP, has been the victim of numerous vicious attacks since she was elected in 2019.

Newspaper reports have suggested that Begum's principled stand on Palestine somehow conflicts with her role in representing her constituents at a local level.

This is an insult to Begum



Apsana Begum

as a hard working constituency MP and also a gross insult to the community in east London as a whole.

It implies an indifference on the part of local residents to the rights of oppressed people suffering elsewhere

in the world. Begum deserves support for her stance, and for her steadfastness in the face of the vilification she has received from some as a result of it.

And it is clear that Begum's principled stand on Palestine is very widely shared in our community.

Both Tower Hamlets and Newham Palestine Solidarity Campaign have written a statement in support of Begum and against the abuse she has received.

Rob Ferguson
East London

Just a thought...

Stand with the rail strikers

FUNNY HOW we were told, only recently, that rail workers were "essential" and "key workers", but now the Tory press has them cast as panto villains.

Why should rail workers bear the brunt of the cost of living crisis the Tories knew was coming yet failed to alleviate?

Mark Sohn
On Facebook

LET'S HOPE the Trade Union Congress and the unions pull their finger out and show this country the power that unions hold.

Dobbie Adobe
On Facebook

More workers will now go hungry

THE COST of living crisis is here, and I see it every time I go to the supermarket.

In the last few months I've seen the price of my weekly shop soar. Items like pasta and butter are going up and up.

My question is how long will it be before ordinary people are sick of paying a premium to afford the basics?

Caitlin Douglas
Leeds

Don't believe Uber's spin

I'VE NOTICED an advert recently for Uber on YouTube.

It shows the benefits of being an Uber driver—paid holidays, pension scheme and sick pay. Uber only offers those things because it lost its employment case in Britain.

Now it pretends these are some great thing that Uber itself offered.

Nick Stennett
On Facebook

A big royal racist insult

I CAN'T believe Prince William and Kate were carted out to reveal the Windrush monument this week.

It's insulting because the royal's wealth and affluence is built on empire, slavery and racism.

David Shepherd
Eastbourne

SOLID ACTION INSPIRES MILLIONS FACING PAY CUTS

LIVERPOOL



CARNFORTH



ALL ABOARD THE STRIKE TRAIN

THREE STRIKE DAYS SHOWED HOW TO DERAIL BOSSES **BY SAM ORD**

THE FIGHTBACK is here, and it's being led by thousands of rail workers who, last week, left the bosses and the Tories shaking. From Aberdeen to Hastings picket lines were packed with dozens of supporters, all offering their support for the strikes.

And big rallies on Saturday brought together activists and workers currently fighting in their own disputes. The strikers have simple demands that have resonated with workers across the country.

They want fair pay, safety, and no compulsory redundancies as the Tories' cost of living crisis begins to bite. For that reason many view the rail strikes as the start of a large-scale fightback against high costs and low pay.

And for many workers, who are also suffering a pinch on their wages and conditions, they will be left with the feeling that they can fight back too. The strikers have been given a boost from massive amounts of support.

"I haven't seen this much practical support for rail workers ever," said Andy, a Network Rail worker from east London. He told Socialist Worker, "People offered us food, tea and coffee—some people even asked if they could donate money. Passing buses, taxis, vans and cars are raising their fists out of the window, beeping their horns. "The amount of support makes us feel ten feet tall."

He added, "Everyone I know talks about the strike, sure we're going to win and people who have also got low pay or whatever are pinning their hopes on us. "I think Network Rail chief executive Andrew Hains has been shown up.

More people are on the picket lines than I expected.

"Winning the strike isn't a sure thing, but what we have done is shown the government and Hains that they can't just do what they like with us. We will stand up for our rights. The support the general public has given us has also shown the Tories that next time they try a pay cut or job cut or whatever, we won't stand for it. They'll think twice."

The solidarity from ordinary people will embarrass the Tories, who now have egg on their faces.

Negotiate

Hoping to turn people against the rail strikes, they have relentlessly attacked workers, claiming they are overpaid, that they refuse to negotiate and that all are against them. Boris Johnson described the strike as "reckless and wanton". Transport minister Grant Shapps said the action was "punishing" millions of "innocent people".

Despite the attacks from the top,



Solidarity from ordinary people will embarrass the Tories who now have egg on their faces

hundreds of ordinary people have ignored the lies and joined the picket lines.

Bus drivers delivered food to the pickets in York. In Manchester, Bristol and at Waterloo station in London Extinction Rebellion activists joining workers meant that their time turner flag became a common sight on pickets.

Nearly every picket line received solidarity from local residents, trade unionists and campaigners. Joining pickets boosted the feeling of renewed hope and determination for all that stood with the strikers. And big protests further added to the buoyant mood.

Around 200 striking workers outsourced to Mitie at St George's Hospital in London flooded a tube train as they travelled to the central London RMT rally on Saturday.

As they marched toward the RMT demonstration, they chanted, "One struggle, one fight". They swelled the demonstration outside Kings Cross to 400.

On Saturday, the last day of strikes, hundreds of people marched through Glasgow city centre to the picket line at Glasgow Central station. Protesters chanted, "The workers united will never be defeated."

They were joined by trade unionists and the FBU union, who brought a fire engine wrapped in flags.

Around 300 people rallied at Liverpool Lime Street, with every speaker mentioning the importance of solidarity and the growing confidence in the trade union movement.

Many said that workers must take action together across different industries. A banner summarised the mood. It

LONDON



YORK

read, "Victory to the rail workers. Their fight is our fight."

Around 400 rallied in Bristol, with 200 in Manchester, Sheffield and Nottingham. Many more rallies were held across Britain. A delegation of RMT volunteers at the Glastonbury music festival received support from festival-goers despite the media claiming the strike would "cause chaos" to them.

The torrent of support for rail strikers has meant even Labour MPs have been willing to break ranks. Despite Keir Starmer telling his MPs to avoid the picket lines, some have ignored his advice and shown solidarity anyway.

Many socialist organisations, labour campaigners and Labour Party branches have also given practical solidarity to the workers.

Supporters poured onto picket lines to show resistance to the Tory party as an increasing number of people are skipping meals, failing to pay bills and falling into debt.

Political

So there's a good reason workers across every industry in Britain identified sharply with the strikes.

Train worker Darren from London told Socialist Worker, "Initially we thought this would just be a normal industrial dispute. The actions of Boris Johnson and Grant Shapps have made it completely political. We are seeing a positive response from the public. Despite the inconvenience, passengers are supportive of the movement."

Darren put this down to all working class people struggling to afford the basics. Adam, a striking LNER worker

from Northumbria, told Socialist Worker, "Public support has gone beyond expectations. People understand that everyone's struggling."

"It's not just about individual groups. Pay and conditions are low for everyone, and they support us because there's a lack of faith in the government, and they don't believe the media."

'We're striking for a safer rail network'

STRIKES HAVE the power to transform the rail networks into one that puts the safety of customers and workers first.

"Safety is the most important thing," Greater Anglia train worker Marvin told Socialist Worker. Marie, also a striking rail worker in Greater Anglia, agreed and said, "I think the bosses put money above safety."

As the workers walked out, scab workers dangerously put trains on the wrong routes.

A reliance on inexperienced agency workers, jobs cut and overworked and unpaid staff is a recipe for a tragedy.

Striking worker, Luca added, "Gate staff who could face job losses are the first point of contact for passengers. If a wheelchair user enters, we take care of them and

make them comfortable. If station staff are made redundant, mothers with babies, people who are blind or elderly will get turned off train travel. It's unsafe without staff."

Luca and Marie said safety shouldn't be understated and that it was important for their union leaders to keep talking about it.

Luca is a new worker, but two weeks ago, he experienced "young people run across the tracks without looking".

"If we weren't there no one would have been able to report the incident," he said.

Dan, a Network Rail worker from Coventry, said, "If bosses get what they want on changes to maintenance schedules, yearly safety inspections will happen only every two years."



WIGAN

THANKS TO all the Socialist Worker readers that sent reports and photographs. Those featured include those taken by Guy Smallman, Wendy Smith, Audrey Glover, Martin Lynch and Chris Fuller

NORWICH



'One woman gave us muffins and said, please keep fighting'

"THE MEDIA have gone too far, and people are seeing right through the bullshit" said striker Andy.

Maria added, "A few people believe the media and think we all get paid £44,000—it's a big lie."

Some rail workers believe this is why an above inflation pay rise of at least 11.7 percent isn't being demanded by general secretary Mick Lynch and other RMT leaders.

Leading figures have repeatedly said 7 percent is fair. But this is far below the rate of inflation and is a real term pay cut.

Marie said, "Of course 7 percent is better than what we've got now. I think 11.7 percent would be nice, and I think that's reasonable."

Luca added, "We definitely need a pay rise higher than inflation. Just 7 percent is not enough. It won't make a difference."

A new poll by Opinium found that 70 percent of people support inflation level pay rises, with 84 percent agreeing that rail profits should be reinvested into maintaining staff.

All workers who are suffering rising costs are watching the RMT pay dispute. A win for rail workers would boost the confidence of other workers to mount a fight back.

Luca told Socialist Worker that this had been apparent on the picket line. "One woman gave us muffins and simply said, 'please keep fighting.'"

"It makes us feel special. People are watching us, and we are a guide for people who see us. We might be inspiring them to also take action."

An above inflation pay rise is a possibility. Bus drivers employed by Stagecoach in Worthing won a 15.8 percent pay rise. And other bus



The strike is showing signs of spreading. Drivers in Aslef are balloting at 13 train operating companies

WOLVERHAMPTON



drivers, lorry drivers and more have also recently won pay deals of up to 25 percent.

With rail companies pocketing an average of £500 million a year, there is plenty of money to give workers an inflation beating deal.

The strike is showing signs of spreading. The train drivers union Aslef, was set to ballot its workers at 13 train operating companies. And Aslef members on south London trams were set to strike for 48 hours from Tuesday of this week and 13 July.

Balloting

Rail workers in the TSSA union are also balloting on Network Rail and nine train operating companies.

And 10,000 London underground workers in the RMT voted again to strike over job cuts and pension changes.

This mood to organise and fight back has spread to other industries. The TUC union grouping said Google searches for "join union" surged by nearly 200 percent last week.

And some 640 people joined the PCS union in the space of a week.

The rail workers have been an inspiration to every worker who has dealt with Covid, cuts, high prices and low pay.

A win would be a blow for the Tory party and their crooked agenda. But for this more action is desperately needed. The RMT must escalate strikes..

The fight for our lives is on. Backing down now would serve a blow to all workers and serve the Tories and the bosses precisely what they want.

WHAT WE STAND FOR

These are the core politics of the Socialist Workers Party.

INDEPENDENT WORKING CLASS ACTION

Under capitalism workers' labour creates all profit. A socialist society can only be constructed when the working class seizes control of the means of production and democratically plans how they are used.

REVOLUTION NOT REFORM

The present system cannot be patched up or reformed as the established Labour and trade union leaders say.

It has to be overthrown. Capitalism systematically degrades the natural world. Ending environmental crisis means creating a new society.

THERE IS NO PARLIAMENTARY ROAD

The structures of the present parliament, army, police and judiciary cannot be taken over and used by the working class. They grew up under capitalism and are designed to protect the ruling class against the workers.

The working class needs an entirely different kind of state—a workers' state based upon councils of workers' delegates and a workers' militia.

At most parliamentary activity can be used to make propaganda against the present system.

Only the mass action of the workers themselves can destroy the system.

INTERNATIONALISM

The struggle for socialism is part of a worldwide struggle. We campaign for solidarity with workers in other countries.

We oppose everything which turns workers from one country against those from other countries.

We oppose racism and imperialism. We oppose all immigration controls.

We support the right of black people and other oppressed groups to organise their own defence. We support all genuine national liberation movements.

The experience of Russia demonstrates that a socialist revolution cannot survive in isolation in one country.

In Russia the result was state capitalism, not socialism. In Eastern Europe and China a similar system was later established by Stalinist parties.

We support the struggle of workers in these countries against both private and state capitalism.

We are for real social, economic and political equality of women.

We are for an end to all forms of discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

We oppose discrimination against disabled people including those who experience mental distress.

We defend the right of believers to practise their religion without state interference.

THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

To achieve socialism the most militant sections of the working class have to be organised into a revolutionary socialist party.

Such a party can only be built by activity in the mass organisations of the working class.

We have to prove in practice to other workers that reformist leaders and reformist ideas are opposed to their own interests.

We have to build a rank and file movement within the unions.

To join us, turn to page 16 or go to www.swp.org.uk or phone 020 7840 5602

Socialist Workers Party meetings

The Socialist Workers Party continues to hold online meetings during the pandemic. This ensures that there can still be collective and safe discussion, organising and actions. Branches also hold in-person meetings with precautions taken for a safe environment.

Most of the meetings will be held using the Zoom system. Download the Zoom app onto your phone or computer and just before the time given for your local meeting ask to "Join a meeting".

You can then enter the number printed on this page for the appropriate meeting. **The password for all meetings is 967537.**

Make sure you look at the SWP Facebook page facebook.com/SocialistWorkersParty for news of national online meetings and other updates.

RAIL WORKERS aren't the only group to have struck over pay

Are we entering a new era of strikes?

GLASGOW

Thu 7 Jul, 7pm
Avant Garde,
34-44 King St,
G1 5QT
879-2402-3259

NORWICH

Wed 6 July, 7.30pm
Butterfly Café,
114A King St,
NR1 1QE
906-652-5299

SHEFFIELD AND SOUTH YORKSHIRE

Thu 7 Jul, 7pm
Central United Reform
Church, S1 2JB
528-174-9278

ABERDEEN

Why the police can't be reformed

Wed 6 July, 7pm
894-2628-7708

BIRMINGHAM

All you need to know about Marx

Wed 6 July, 7pm
Friends of the Earth,
The Warehouse,
54-57 Allison St,
B5 5TH
281-634-5938

BOURNEMOUTH

1974 – the year the unions brought down the Tories

Thu 7 Jul, 7.30pm
Friends Meeting House,
16 Wharnccliffe Rd,
Boscombe, BH5 1AH
843-0549-8738

BRADFORD

After the murder of Shireen Abu Akleh – how can Palestine be free?

Thu 7 Jul, 7pm
Bread + Roses,
14 N Parade, BD1 3HT
885-9187-7552

BRIGHTON AND HOVE

Rock Against Racism – when music helped beat the Nazis

Thu 14 Jul, 7pm
Friends Meeting House, Ship St,
BN1 1AF
818-391-0420

BRISTOL

The US and China – imperialism and the shifting balance of power

Wed 6 July, 7pm
688-397-3148

CAMBRIDGE

Why we oppose all immigration controls

Thu 7 Jul, 7.30pm
Friends Meeting House,
12 Jesus Ln, CB5 8BA
681-800-4408

CARDIFF

The revolutionary ideas of Karl Marx

Wed 6 July, 7.30pm
Mackintosh Residents Community Centre,
Keppoch St,
CF24 3JW
630-181-4857

CHESTERFIELD

After the Murder of Shireen Abu Akleh – how can Palestine be free?

Thu 7 Jul, 7pm
Assembly Rooms,
13/14 Chesterfield Rd,
S40 1AR
828-532-8731

COVENTRY

Socialism and species extinction

Wed 6 July, 7.30pm
823-945-1917

DEVON & CORNWALL

Covid – what's behind the anti-vaxxers' conspiracy theories

Thu 7 Jul, 7.30pm
865-2972-2883

EAST MIDLANDS

Why Keir Starmer and the Labour Party won't support strikes

Wed 6 July, 7pm
The Dice Cup,
68-70 Mansfield Rd,
NG1 3GY
868-9106-9359

EDINBURGH

What is the rank and file strategy we need?

Wed 6 July, 7.30pm
868-9106-9359

HARLOW

The Tories in crisis – why is Starmer so awful?

Thu 7 Jul, 7.30pm
832-8746-7480

HOME COUNTIES

All you need to know about Marx

Thu 7 Jul, 6.30 pm
8341-170-103

HUDDERSFIELD

Is human nature a barrier to socialism?

Wed 6 July, 6.30pm
290-168-1804

KENT

From the First World War to Vietnam – how people power ended wars

Thu 7 Jul, 7.30pm
Riverside Creative Hub,
Conference room,
13 Military Rd,
ME4 4JG
434-623-8064

LANCASTER AND MORECAMBE

Does it matter if Boris Johnson goes?

Thu 7 Jul, 7pm
Friends Meeting House,
23 Meeting House Ln,
LA1 1TX
992-204-9372

LEEDS

Clara Zetkin and how revolution ended the First World War

Thu 7 Jul, 7pm
The Swarthmore Education Centre, Yorkshire, 2-7
Woodhouse Square,
LS3 1AD
881-4770-0676

LIVERPOOL

Is there a new mood of resistance?

Wed 6 July, 7pm
Friends Meeting House, 22
School Ln, L1 3BT

LONDON: HACKNEY

The Russian Revolution and national freedom

Thu 7 Jul, 7.30pm
Halkevi Community Centre, E8 3DF
854-8245-8715

LONDON: HARINGEY

From Blair to Starmer – why won't Labour oppose the Tories?

Wed 6 July, 7.30pm
Kurdish Community Centre,
11 Portland Gardens,
N4 1HU
4593-881-576

LONDON: ISLINGTON

What does it mean to be a Marxist today?

Thu 7 Jul, 7pm
874-012-7970

LONDON: NEWHAM

Is Marxism eurocentric?

Wed 6 July, 7pm
Stratford Advice Arcade,
107-109 The Grove,
E15 1HP
288-098-8827

LONDON: SOUTH

Why are the Tories intensifying their attacks on immigration?

Wed 6 July, 7pm
Vida Walsh Centre,
2B Saltoun Rd,
SW2 1EP
497-196-1801

LONDON: SOUTH EAST

From the First World War to Vietnam – how people power ended wars

Wed 6 July, 7pm
Deptford Lounge,
9 Giffin St,
SE8 4RJ
529-913-6390

LONDON: TOWER HAMLETS

System change not climate change

Wed 6 July, 7.30pm
Bernie Cameron Community Centre,
32 Merchant St,
E3 4LX
818-391-0420

LONDON: WALTHAM FOREST

Socialism or barbarism? What is the alternative to capitalism?

Wed 6 July, 7.30pm
William Morris Community Centre,
6-8 Greenleaf Rd,
E17 6QQ
543-023-057

LONDON: WEST & NORTHWEST

The revolutionary ideas of Karl Marx

Thu 7 Jul, 7.30pm
812-4911-6190

MANCHESTER

Marxism in 30 minutes

Wed 6 July, 7pm
Friends' Meeting House,
6 Mount St,
M2 5NS

NEWCASTLE

Is revolution possible in the 21st Century?

Wed 6 July, 7pm
Tyneside Irish Centre,
Gallowgate
NE1 4SG
368-595-2712

NORTH EAST SCOTLAND

Why the police can't be reformed

Wed 6 July, 7pm
894-2628-7708

OXFORD & THAMES VALLEY

What would a revolution look like?

Wed 6 July, 7pm
Michael Young Building,
Ablett Cl,
OX4 1XH
861-2001-6477

PORTSMOUTH

Sudan – the revolution continues

Wed 6 July, 7.30pm
488-934-2809

SOUTHAMPTON

From the First World War to Vietnam – how people power ended wars

Wed 6 July, 7.30pm
381-513-5080

SWANSEA & WEST WALES

From porn in Parliament to spiking – why does sexism run so deep?

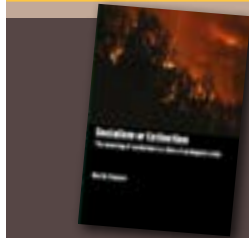
Wed 6 July, 7pm
Brynmill Community Centre, St Alban's Rd,
Brynmill,
SA2 0BP
902-964-963

WIGAN

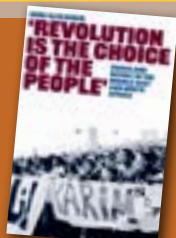
#BLM 2 years after George Floyd's murder – how do we fight racism?

Thu 7 Jul, 7pm
894-2628-7708

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'Revolution is the choice of the people'
by Anne Alexander
£12



Ricky Reel: silence is not an option
by Sukhdev Reel
£10



Selected writings on socialism and liberation
by John Molyneux
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Life ruined by a sport where players are a commodity

Tigers, the true story of Martin Bengtsson, is a journey through a modern football industry where everyone, has a price tag, writes **Yuri Prasad**

WHAT IF you achieve your childhood dream only to find out it isn't what you always wanted?

That's the question posed by Tigers—the true story of a Swedish teenage footballing prodigy who lands a place in Inter Milan's prestigious youth academy.

Martin Bengtsson (Erik Enge) is a skinny and awkward 16 year old who is completely obsessed with the game. He directs every aspect of his life towards his playing career.

His diary is a series of hectoring notes to self, demanding greater concentration but simultaneously "less overthinking".

Every waking moment is filled with practice and exercise. When not so absorbed, Martin is to be found twitching and nervously picking at scabs, knowing that every minute is wasted training time.

When his big deal with Inter arrives it should mark the culmination of all that effort but instead it turns to disaster.

Director Ronnie Sandahl has his documentary-style camera follow Martin into the dormitory where he is bunked with dozens of other young players looking for their big chance.

Aggression

It is a cauldron of pent-up fear, aggression and rivalry. Martin discovers he hasn't joined a team but something more akin to a footballing version of The Hunger Games.

On the pitch, players turn on each other in a bid for their coach's recognition.

Off the pitch, that same coach engages in all manner of mind games to test the mental strength of the club's "investments" and to keep the players "hungry". The stress and



MARTIN HAS finally made it when he plays for Inter Milan at home—or has he?

solitude take their toll on Martin. Isolated by both his age and his inability to speak even a modicum of Italian, he struggles to form even basic relationships. Then he meets American goalkeeper Ryan (Alfred Enoch).

Ryan takes Martin under his wing for a period, but then finds himself sold to lowly Hull City before the young Swede could get too comfortable.

Martin's moment finally comes when he is selected for the first team

in a home game. The magnificent San Siro stadium is packed and Inter are on a roll.

But when Martin comes off the bench the game becomes a series of distorted fragments.

The result is a disconcerting mess of Martin's tangled emotions combined with changing room mundanities and the signing of autographs.

Afterwards, just in case Martin thought he'd made it, a coach tells him the only reason he was selected was to increase his potential resale

value. Tigers takes a big swipe at the abuse culture that reigns in football. But it leaves open a question of whether Martin's ultimate departure was alone the result of the poisonous environment, or of his own mental fragility.

Resolving that question sets the film quite a high bar, but it's one that Tiger should have at least tried to answer.

Tigers is in cinemas from Friday 1 July. It is based on the memoir In the Shadow of San Siro by Martin Bengtsson

Can drama of the Miners' Strike carry this cop show?

TELEVISION

SHERWOOD

All episodes now available on BBC iPlayer

I LOVED the BBC drama Sherwood when it started, but halfway through I wasn't so sure.

It's set in Nottingham where, decades after the great miners' strike of 1984-5, the divisions of the time have not gone away.

Some miners struck, some scabbed and nobody forgets. It has spycops,

trade unionists and scenes of picket line battles against the police. What's not to like?

Gary Jackson (Alun Armstrong), a former striking miner is still "NUM until I die". He's the target of those who broke away to join the UDM fake union.

Then he's murdered with an arrow. The killing draws police chief Ian St Clair (David Morrissey) back to his home town.

He's the "good cop" who was seen as a traitor by strikers but was then



Scenes of picket line battles

himself shocked by the brutal behaviour of the Met. St Clair discovers Gary's arrest records from 1984 are redacted, even though the charges were dropped.

That was thanks to the intervention of Kevin Salisbury (Robert Glenister).

He was one of the cops sent by the Met to smash the strikers. Salisbury now re-appears, with his own motives for coming back and his own past to hide.

It has a good cast and a real sense of menace at

points. But I'm going off it a bit and I don't know how good it will be by the end. Unusually it wasn't all on iPlayer straight way and you had to wait each Monday and Tuesday for the episodes.

At the beginning the feeling of tension and foreboding came from the legacy of the strike and the state assaults on workers. As it went on it became more like a traditional police series.

But I will be watching to the end.

Charlie Kimber

RADIO

PERCY SHELLEY, REFORMER AND RADICAL

Starts Sun 3 July, 4.30pm on BBC Radio 4 and then on BBC Sounds

THE POET Benjamin Zephaniah is a huge admirer of Shelley.

Shelley comes to most of us in neatly packaged school anthologies that safely repeat the classics

And Zephaniah got off to a terrible start with the poet at school when a teacher told him he was stupid for not fully understanding what he was reading.

But he was turned on to Shelley in his early 20s



Benjamin Zephaniah

when he stumbled on a copy of Paul Foot's Red Shelley.

Foot put Shelley's works into the historical context in which they were written, in the early 19th century. It was a time of profound social and political instability.

Understanding the context enabled Zephaniah to connect with the radical nature of Shelley and his work.

He says, "As a young, angry black man in the



Percy Shelley

1980s, it was a revelation to find a dead white poet that made sense to me. Good poetry has no age, and no colour."

What he found in Shelley changed his life.

Zephaniah discovered that the poem he had first encountered at school, The Mask of Anarchy, was an angry ballad written by Shelley in response to the Peterloo massacre.

He now has a lifelong attachment to that poem.

I T'S shocking—but perhaps not surprising—to many that the Labour Party tried to ban its senior politicians from supporting last week's rail strike.

Perhaps even more surprising still is the revolt among Labour politicians after some of them defied leader Keir Starmer and joined picket lines anyway.

Even members of Starmer's shadow cabinet—his leading politicians—threatened revolt.

One said, anonymously, it would be “outrageous” for Starmer to discipline MPs for joining picket lines. Another said it was “dumb” to try and stop them going in the first place.

And Starmer's former adviser Simon Fletcher said, “There is very widespread support for the trade union in this dispute and there would be a huge explosion if there was disciplinary action threatened against people,” he said.

Yet for Starmer, being seen not to support the strike was a matter of principle—and he didn't want to back down.

“That's how we'll prove ourselves as a serious operation, a serious government in waiting, and is how we'll win elections,” said the usual, unnamed Labour source.

And that's the row in a nutshell.

Even some of Labour's most “moderate” MPs occasionally feel uncomfortable criticising striking workers.

LABOUR'S trade union links and claim to represent the working class means they know they need to keep workers and trade union leaders on side.

And sometimes even Labour leaders will deem it necessary to make an appearance on the pickets.

Yet at the same time, being a “serious government in waiting” means rejecting the disruption of strikes and the politics of class struggle.

That contradiction has been at the heart of the Labour Party ever since it began.

You might easily remember how in 2011, Labour's then leader Ed Miliband denounced a mass public sector strike with the robotic mantra “these strikes are wrong.”

But what of how, during the great 1984-85 Miners' Strike, Labour failed to stand fully with the strikers?

Instead, its leader Neil Kinnock joined in right wing demands that the miners hold a ballot intended to undermine the strike.

Or how the party shunned the campaign to release and get justice for the Shrewsbury Pickets—jailed for their role in a construction strike?



MARCHING AS part of the general strike in 1926

WHY WON'T LABOUR BACK STRIKES?

It may come as a surprise that a party that claims to back workers has called for MPs to avoid rail pickets. But Labour, Nick Clark, writes, has usually opposed strikes

None of these are anomalies. An aversion to strikes is built into Labour's very foundations.

Even Labour's “socialist” predecessor, the Independent Labour Party (ILP), rejected class struggle, stressing the common interest of bosses and workers.

ILP leader Keir Hardie—hailed as the Labour Party's founder—wrote that it was “a degradation of the socialist movement to drag it down to the level of a mere struggle



The trade union leaders swung behind Labour Party after a series of major defeats

for supremacy between two contending factions. We don't want ‘class conscious’ socialists,” he said.

The trade union leaders of the TUC swung behind support for a Labour Party after a series of major defeats for strikes in the late 1890s.

Hardie celebrated the “utter rout” of a strike of Scottish miners as “nevertheless a great victory for the Labour movement.” It had, he said, convinced many of the miners

“to throw in their lot with the ILP.”

After more defeats, the ILP's linked newspaper, Labour Leader, wrote, “In the end it may turn out the lesson was worth the cost.

“It would be more in accordance with the traditional principles of English politics and common sense if the battle was transferred from the poverty stricken homes of the workers to the floor of the House of Commons.”

The ILP and union leaders founded the Labour Party in 1900.

About a year later the government upheld a court ruling that outlawed picketing and forced unions to compensate bosses for strikes.

This, more than anything else, convinced union leaders to back the new party.

As the TUC still says on its website today, “If the right to strike was ever to be preserved as an essential instrument of trade union policy, then the new principle embodied in the Taff Vale decision must be reversed by parliament.”

“If this was to be done, the trade unions must secure greater and more influential representation in parliament.”

SO THE turn towards parliament marked a retreat from trade unionism and the idea that workers' action could win.

In creating the Labour Party, the union leaders created a group of politicians for whom parliament came first.

The Great Unrest of 1910-14 began ten years after Labour was founded. It saw strikes by three big battalions of the working class—the miners, the rail workers and the dockers, and mass demonstrations.

Labour leader Ramsay MacDonald was disturbed. “If we had been consulted first of all we should have advised the men to begin with Parliamentary action, both on the floor of the House of Commons, and in Ministers' private rooms,” he wrote.

“Whilst the heroics outside are being indulged in, Parliamentary action of a general character is being paralysed and prejudiced.”

It was a similar story a few years later in 1919, amid a great wave of radicalisation in the wake of the Russian Revolution. Labour's leaders were desperate to put a stop to it.

Labour leader Arthur Henderson told parliament he “deplored” strikes. “I have done as much as any man alive to prevent strikes,” he reassured MPs.

And again, during the General Strike of 1926—probably the biggest test of Labour's support for workers' resistance—its leaders recoiled.

The year before, MacDonald had even despaired that a

Tory government's concession to a miners' strike threat “increased the power and prestige” of people who thought action shouldn't be confined to parliament.

During the strike itself, Labour conspired with union leaders to have it called off at the earliest opportunity.

Then, once defeated, its leaders celebrated. As Labour MP Phillip Snowden said, “the lesson of the futility and foolishness of such a trial of strength.”

THAT appeal—justice through the ballot box—is how Labour usually manages to square its hostility to strikes with its claim to represent workers.

It supports their struggles, but only to contain them within acceptable, parliamentary channels.

Rather than Labour seeing that strikes can inflict a defeat on the government and the bosses driving this assault, the key thing for them is that both sides “get round the table.”

Only Labour—in tune with the needs of business, but connected to union leaders—can “do the job properly” and stop strikes before things get out of hand.

That goal has often led Labour, and the union leaders who look to it as an alternative to strikes, to stifle militancy together.

Labour once again kept its distance from the great class battles of the early 1970s.

But it did come up with the “social contract”—an agreement with union leaders to limit wage demands and hold off strikes.

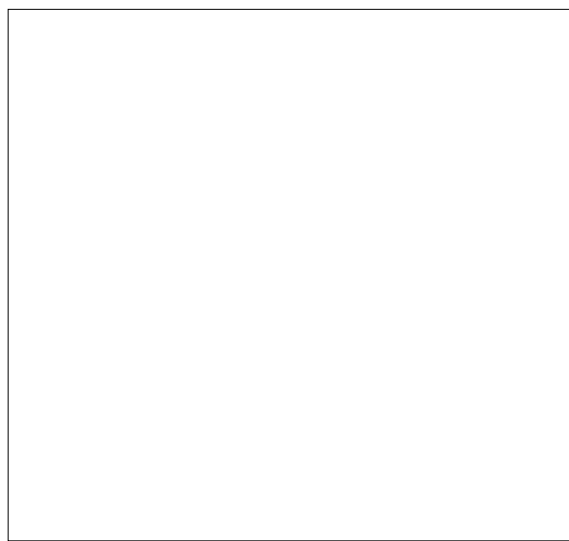
IN PRACTICE it meant that when Labour was elected in 1974, it imposed the worst attacks on workers since the 1930s.

And by 1978 some 25 percent of people in Britain lived below the official poverty line.

It ended in the Winter of Discontent—a series of angry, militant strikes that pitted workers against a Labour government.

It wasn't the first time that Labour tried to prove it could manage workers' resistance. During the Second World War, the role of Clement Attlee's Labour in the coalition government was to encourage workers not to strike.

After the war his government sent soldiers to break



Police attacking miners on pickets near Llanwern steel works in South Wales during the 1984-5 strike (top) Harold Wilson after he was elected in 1964 (above)

strikes more than 18 different times. And in 1966, a Harold Wilson Labour government used emergency powers to beat a seafarers' strike over pay.

Bosses and bankers had demanded Wilson's government drive down wages in response to an economic crisis—and he responded by making an example of the seafarers.

While the seafarers insisted their strike was for pay, Wilson declared it a “strike against the state, against the community” by “a tightly knit group of politically motivated men.”

It sounds noticeably similar to the way the Tories sometimes talk about the rail strikes.

But the most urgent warning is how desire for “talks” quickly turns into hostility to workers' strikes. And how, in the name of proving itself a “capable,” “responsible” government, it will use its pull on union leaders to bring them to a halt.

That's the nature of a party that's always been more inclined to lead workers to defeat than see their struggles win.

READ MORE

● **The Labour Party: A Marxist History** by Tony Cliff, Donny Gluckstein, Charlie Kimber £14.99

● **Why the Labour left loses** by Nick Clark
Socialist Worker article
bit.ly/whylabourlose

Available at Bookmarks, the socialist bookshop. Phone 020 7637 1848 or go to bookmarksbookshop.co.uk



How effective are the media's attacks on strikes?

The media has clashed with RMT general secretary Mick Lynch, underlining how at key moments it is a mouthpiece for the bosses, writes Isabel Ringrose

BIG RAIL strikes last week unravelled the true nature of the media. Its purpose is to be the mouthpiece of the ruling class—a vessel for their hatred and bigotry.

In its representation of the bosses, politicians, and elite, the media worked itself into a frenzy.

Building up to and during the three days of action by rail workers, headlines were dominated by a tirade of lies and hate.

The Daily Express banished the action as “selfish” and Sky News presenter Kay Burley searched in vain for evidence of violence on the picket lines.

The Sun despaired at the “chaos”, while the BBC forewarned of dark days to come as more strikes are planned.

The Telegraph lambasted the RMT union for inflicting “misery on millions of ordinary people” and “betraying” workers who cannot commute to make profit for their bosses.

Demonisation

The demonisation of the strikers, their union and its general secretary has been sickening. But the agenda is clear—smear the strike and stop people supporting it.

And even the more “liberal” mainstream outlets are completely disconnected from workers' lives and methods of fighting back.

Dominant ideas in society come from the ruling class, and the media is a vital structure to reflect and perpetuate class rule.

But ordinary people don't blindly eat up the media narrative.

Ideas are contested and huge effort is put in to make them appear universal.

But the agenda is hidden

under a campaign of division and false friendship with working people—if purely pro-ruling class propaganda was pumped out, no one would buy into it.

Ordinary people's lives and views are full of contradictions, which is reflected and escalated in the press.

The bosses need to pit nurses, teachers, firefighters and rail workers against each other as enemies rather than a class with a common interest.

In times of struggle their media ramps this up as panic starts to set in.

It has been interesting to note that the media's tirade hasn't worked so well on this occasion.

The targeted hate has been punctuated by the material reality people experience when fighting back.

Far from being unsupported, the strikers have received encouragement.

This is shown by Google searches for “join union” rising 184 percent in a week.

A survey by Savanta ComRes, found that 58 percent of people thought the strikes were justified, with just 34 percent opposing the action.

Millions of people struggling in Tory Britain want an alternative to their crushing realities.

Class struggle and mass action throws open all the contradictions pumped from the top, loosening the media's grip.

Reality

Ideas change during struggle because people's reality shifts.

Workers' self-activity clashes with how we're told the world works and



The media is a vital structure to reflect and perpetuate class rule

our position within it.

Workers can get a sense of their power and envision themselves at the helm.

That's why the elite and their media are struggling to prove they speak for ordinary people, and why they react with such venom to resistance.

But there is an alternative to propaganda that benefits the elite.

Revolutionary newspapers written for and by the working class are the only media with a true interest in supporting struggle and countering the bile.

That's why reading, selling, sharing online and debating Socialist Worker is key for socialists, especially in times of struggle.

And as you read this column and this article, we hope you will help us in that battle.

Refugee saved from deportation still held

by NICK CLARK

A REFUGEE snatched up in a wave of detentions last month says he has been left for four weeks without an inhaler.

Hemin Ali was taken suddenly from his family in Sheffield as part of what the right wing press described as “the biggest deportation exercise ever attempted on one day.”

A legal challenge stopped his deportation at the last minute as his application to remain in Britain is still open—just as it was before he was detained.

Despite this the Home Office never released Hemin back to his family. Instead, it imprisoned him hundreds of miles away in Harmondsworth detention centre near Heathrow.

Now, he says, despite asking for an inhaler for his asthma shortly after arriving, he has yet to get one. And conditions inside the centre are making him ill.

“When they came and grabbed me last month I didn’t bring my inhaler,” Hemin told Socialist Worker.



HEMIN, PICTURED with one of his children, is under the Home Office’s lock and key

“I’m breathing very badly.

“Everybody smokes in here. And the worst thing is the ventilation in my cell, it just brings the smoke into the room. It’s like I’m smoking 24/7.”

He added, “The nurse here said I would see a doctor ASAP. I’ve been to see a nurse twice to put me through to a doctor, but they haven’t.

“I’ve asked the manager and she told me I would be called, but I didn’t hear anything. Then she said the doctor probably couldn’t come because of the train strikes.

“I don’t need a doctor—it’s in my records that I have asthma. I just need a nurse to bring me an inhaler.

“Even my caseworker

knows about it and has contacted Harmondsworth, but I haven’t heard anything.”

A prisons inspectorate report into Harmondsworth, published in April last year, found detainees complained about poor ventilation.

It described how “cell windows were sealed and detainees could not control the flow of fresh air”.

It also found “longstanding problems with the living conditions in the centre”—run by private company Mitie—were “below an acceptable standard.”

These included “persistent problems with pests, filthy cell toilets and broken and dilapidated communal showers.”

“Most cell toilets we saw were filthy and needed to be replaced as managers said they were too damaged to clean,” it said.

“There was also a persistent problem with mice.”

Unhealthy

The inspectorate also said detainees “commonly complained about the standard and variety of the food. They told us that there was not enough fresh produce and that the food was unhealthy.”

It added, “Records from detainee consultation showed that the quality of food was frequently raised, but there had not been any improvements in the standard or range of meals.”

Hemin’s account of conditions in Harmondsworth suggests little has changed.

“It’s really dirty here,” he said. “The floor is all dirty and covered in fag ends.

“There are just two small exercise yards for 570 people. Some people play football, some people play cricket and everyone else just has to sit down and watch. There’s nowhere to walk.

“The food is very poor quality and the canteen is shocking. Sometimes you see a queue of 70-80 people, and there’s a shortage of items.”

Hemin’s story shows the human cost of the Tories’ war on migrants. He should be free, but he’s locked up because the Tories want to make an example of refugees.

“They cannot send me to Erbil—my case is still open,” Hemin explained. “A caseworker has referred me to be released on an electronic tag.

“It’s criminalising—double punishment for being a foreign national—but his senior manager hasn’t signed off on it. I’m still waiting.

“The Tories and these money generating companies just do what they want to do.”

The Home Office has been contacted for comment.

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Roe v Wade—protecting women’s health in the US

Abortion is under severe threat in the US, putting women’s lives at risk. Sarah Bates explores the case that granted women abortion rights in 1973

ACTIVISTS should be preparing to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Roe v Wade this winter. Instead, they are locked in a battle to defend its very existence.

The US Supreme Court decided last Friday to overturn the landmark case that decriminalised some abortions. Its rollback—which affects the lives of women across the country—has to be met with a fightback.

Half a century ago Norma McCorvey, later known publicly as Jane Roe, had no reason to believe her unwanted pregnancy would define reproductive rights for the next half century.

But then she was introduced to lawyer Linda Coffee. They began an unlikely—and at times deeply uneasy—alliance.

Coffee was one of many lawyers and activists who were looking for ways to challenge US abortion law. She argued that it was unconstitutional for women to not have legal access to abortions.

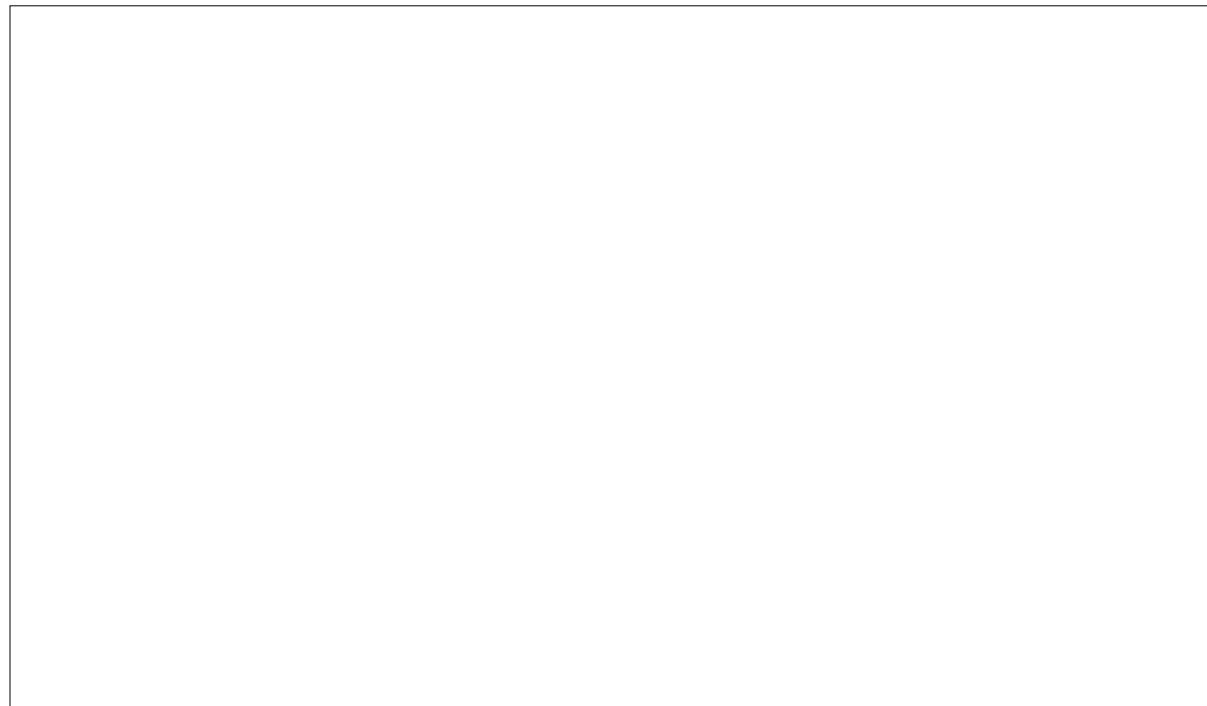
The case had the greatest chance of success if there was a real person wanting a real abortion. That’s where McCorvey came in.

The pair joined forces with Sarah Weddington, another lawyer seeking to liberalise abortion law. And they argued it on the basis that it was a fundamental right for all women.

“We wanted a decision that abortion was covered by the right of privacy,” said Weddington. “Our principles were not based on how conception occurred.”

At the first hearing they came up against the lawyers representing Henry Wade, the district attorney for Dallas County, Texas.

Wade wanted to keep sending abortionists to prison, but the Roe team won a partial victory. The panel decided



WOMEN DEMONSTRATING in New York in 1977 to defend safe and legal abortions

it was unconstitutional but didn’t tell Wade to stop enforcing the law.

In May 1971, when the Supreme Court announced it would hear an appeal to the first ruling, everything changed. Until then the team had relied on friends donating office space and helping with research.

Now the spotlight was on them, the lawyers were “flooded” with offers of money and help.

In the Supreme Court on 13 December 1971 Weddington argued that restrictive abortion laws clashed with the guarantee of “liberty” written into the constitution.

And she exposed the hypocrisy of

bigots insisting that the unborn had a “right to life”, despite foetus’s not being considered alive elsewhere in law.

The lawyer representing Texas misjudged the mood and tried to play the courtroom for laughs. He opened by saying, “It’s an old joke, but when a man argues against two beautiful ladies like this, they’re going to have the last word.”

Following another hearing in October 1972, victory was declared on 22 January the following year. Justice Blackmun wrote an opinion that women should be able to get abortions until the end of their second trimester. The judgement explains that

throughout the first trimester, “The attending physician, in consultation with his patient, is free to determine, without regulation by the state, that, in his medical judgement, the patient’s pregnancy should be terminated.”

For the first 12 weeks of a pregnancy an abortion was a federal right—and individual states could legislate on abortion until the end of the second trimester. Since then abortion rights have come under years of attacks.

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A major advance, but it also fell short

ROE v Wade was a huge victory for abortion rights. The legal ruling didn’t happen in a vacuum, but out of massive social pressure to give women the right to choose.

Yet the ruling never went far enough. Its weaknesses have allowed reactionary elements in both federal and state legislature to starkly strip away abortion access in the intervening decades.

The 1973 ruling located a right to an abortion as one resting with a doctor’s decision. That meant it did not fully grant a woman’s right to choose.

In 1992, Planned Parenthood v Casey saw the Supreme Court rule in favour of putting additional restrictions in place.

Restrict
Now individual states can restrict access during the first trimester as well as the second.

Anti-choicers have also won repressive time limits, mandatory waiting periods and invasive exams for women seeking abortions.

Today just 16 states have laws that protect abortion rights. Some 13 states have “trigger bans” ready to immediately clamp down once Roe v Wade is overruled.

The ruling on Dobbs v Jackson Women’s Health Organization is the next test.

Supreme Court judges are poised to make a decision on whether restrictive abortion laws put forward in 2018 in Mississippi are unconstitutional.

If the justices decide the laws—which bans most abortions after 15 weeks of pregnancy—can stand, Roe v Wade would effectively be gutted. That’s true even if it had not come under attack from the Supreme Court.

Legal battle left McCorvey feeling disillusioned

THE FIRST years of Norma McCorvey’s adulthood were marked by a string of unwanted pregnancies. She was “shocked” when she became pregnant at 17.

By the time her daughter was born, McCorvey was divorced and begged her mother to raise her child.

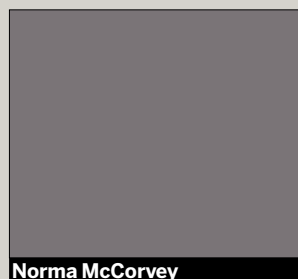
Her second daughter was adopted, after McCorvey asked a nurse if there was a “way that they take your baby”. By her third unplanned

pregnancy at 21 years old, McCorvey couldn’t face either option again.

“I didn’t want to give birth to another unwanted child. I didn’t want to have to give up another child. I didn’t want a child to be born with me as a mother,” she said.

For McCorvey any legal outcome of the case would be too late—she gave birth shortly after the first hearing and almost two years before the final judgement.

She wrote, many years



Norma McCorvey

later, of a “moment or two of pure truth, total clarity” followed by rage. She realised that successful lawsuit or not, she would have to carry

the pregnancy to term.

“I was nothing to Sarah and Linda, nothing more than just a name on a piece of paper”.

It’s been reported that McCorvey never forgave Waddington for not helping her procure an abortion in Mexico—the young lawyer having previously had one herself.

McCorvey’s anonymity didn’t last. She gave interviews and ultimately was co-opted by the anti-choice movement in the 1990s. She said

she regretted taking part in the case and joined anti-choice marches and publicity stunts.

McCorvey was partly driven by a frustration that she was slighted by her lawyers and the wider feminist movement. She also needed money—and the anti-choice bigots have very deep pockets.

McCorvey’s life was profoundly shaped by her involvement in the case, and could have been very different had she had access to abortion.

IN BRIEF

Tractor makers plan crop of strikes

WORKERS AT CNH Industrial tractor factory in Basildon are fighting over pay. More than 500 workers—almost the entire shop floor—were set to strike on Thursday of this week and Friday of next week.

Further strikes are planned for 11, 18 and 19 July, as well as 26 and 30 August.

Will new housing pay offer fall flat?

WORKERS AT housing association Thirteen Housing Group in north east England and Yorkshire have suspended the first of four weeks of strikes to vote on an improved offer.

The result of the ballot—the details of which have been kept confidential—were due on Thursday of this week.

Big strike vote makes Veolia cave

REFUSE WORKERS in Chesterfield, Derbyshire, have called off strikes after being offered a 7.5 percent pay rise. The members of the GMB union, who are outsourced to Veolia, voted 100 percent in favour of strikes in May.

They also accepted the new deal unanimously. While the threat of strikes forced Veolia to improve its offer, 7.5 percent is below inflation. Refuse workers have proven several times in the last year that they can win big when they fight.

A rough deal at sandpaper factory

WORKERS AT a Saint Gobain factory in Stafford are angry after being offered a tiny pay deal. The company which makes abrasives, including sandpaper, offered workers a 3 percent deal.

Members of the GMB union are set to vote on whether to strike in a consultative ballot.

Closing time for Brighton pub bosses

PUB WORKERS at the Saint James Tavern in Brighton have struck over low pay and precarious contracts.

Workers at the pub are demanding to be paid at least £11.50 an hour and to be awarded full sick pay.

They also want formal recognition for their union, the UVW.

Sick of delays at medicine school

CLEANERS AT the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine have voted to strike over pay and victimisation.

Bosses promised last year to bring workers in house but have since refused to meet.

The members of the IWGB union are also angry that since mounting a campaign for better pay, six union members have been disciplined by management.

TRAFFIC WARDENS



STRIKERS ARE game, and set to match bosses' refusal to budge with escalation

Wandsworth workers out during Wimbledon

by BEN WINDSOR

OUTSOURCED traffic wardens in Wandsworth, south London, are striking again this week, after taking three days of strikes last week.

The members of the GMB union have decided to escalate and will be striking for five days during the nearby Wimbledon tennis championships.

This is typically one of the most profitable weeks of the year for their employer, NSL.

The workers intend to organise a protest outside the championships to raise the profile of their dispute.

One warden described to Socialist Worker the conditions traffic wardens work in.

"We're too exhausted to do anything after work" they said.

"We regularly walk 16 miles a day, in all weathers."

A common complaint is a complete disrespect from the boss. One warden said, "He didn't even thank us for working through the pandemic."

The wardens spoke about how wealthy people park wherever they please and don't care about the £55 fines.

The GMB regional organiser calculated that during the tennis, parking fines alone would bring in a minimum of £22,700 a day—and parking bay suspensions would bring in another £18,000.

The strike is staying strong, with 97 percent of the workforce out.

Working conditions are so bad even managers have joined the action. Only escalation will win workers the better pay and

conditions they deserve.

●TRAFFIC WARDENS in Wiltshire will strike for seven extra days this week after striking for two days in May.

Workers were hit by council bosses with a 10 percent pay cut, which would mean their pay would shrink by £2,000 a year.

Wiltshire council is currently refusing to meet for talks and has also refused to take fire and rehire off the table.

More days of strikes have the power to hit the council hard as parking fines can make the council upwards of £30,000 a day.

The members of the GMB union were set to head to pickets on Thursday and strike until next Wednesday.

BINS

Arrested Wealden pickets set to appear in court

THE THREE GMB trade union officials who were arrested on picket lines in Wealden, east Sussex, last month were set to appear in court on Wednesday of this week.

Trade unionists and their supporters planned to gather outside the court in Hastings to show solidarity.

The arrest offered a glimpse of the kind of

repression the police can hand out to trade unionists after being given more powers by the Tories.

At the time of arrests, workers had been striking for over two weeks after receiving a rubbish pay offer from outsourcer Biffa. The dispute has since ended with workers voting to return to work last week.

COVENTRY

Sticking points stop deal

HGV2 DRIVERS in Coventry are still on strike against the Labour-led council in their dispute over pay. The drivers, who mainly drive bin lorries for the council, want bosses to shift the pay grades to increase pay for all drivers.

A deal is close, but issues over existing and built-up holiday pay are standing in the way. And the strikers have been clear that disciplinary action against deputy convenor Pete Randle must be withdrawn before they return.

Workers have been on all-out strike since January. Unite union must keep up the pressure with more

rallies and marches that have increased support for the strike.

And the Tom White Waste plant should be a target. It is owned by the council and is being used to coordinate scab labour to undermine the strike. Trade unionists should also continue to financially support the strikers' battle to ensure the long-running strike stays strong.

●Send donations to Unity Trust Bank a/c Unite WM/7116 Branch Coventry Local Government, Sort code: 60-83-01, a/c number: 20302665
●Send messages of support to Pete.Randle@unitetheunion.org

UBER



UBER STRIKERS on the march

PICTURE: ADCU

Drivers keep up the fight for justice and better pay

AROUND 100 Uber drivers struck and marched in London on Wednesday of last week.

ADCU union members rallied outside the firm's Aldgate Tower offices. They are demanding £2.50 a mile or 20p a minute, plus an end to unfair dismissals and for Uber to comply with recent court rulings.

Driver Jcem told Socialist Worker that Uber drivers' wages aren't keeping up with soaring fuel costs. He added, "Most Uber workers are migrants from across the world. If 90 percent of workers were from Britain, they would be treated better I think." Workers said they are

also constantly afraid that Transport for London (TfL) will revoke their licences and that it's hard to appeal against such decisions.

Driver Steve said that Uber is still managing to dodge granting workers basic rights. "After the Supreme Court ruling that said Uber drivers are workers, the company has cherry picked what they wanted to do. And taxi app Bolt, which it also applied to, has ignored it altogether.

"But this is the price of the gig economy. These companies do what they like. They've exploited the lack of regulation to make as much money as possible."

EDUCATION

UCU UNION

University fights to go on?

THE FUTURE of the two separate but connected university disputes hung in the balance on Monday of this week.

On Monday members of the UCU union discussed the way forward at a Branch Delegates Meeting. It debated when to take further action over cuts to the USS pension scheme.

They also were set to decide the fate of their dispute over workload, pay, equalities and casualisation.

The meeting comes after a campaign by those at the top of the union, including general secretary Jo Grady, to sabotage the dispute and cancel action.

Now activists within the union are trying to save their dispute and are

pushing for fresh ballots over whether to strike to open in the summer.

UCU Left, which Socialist Worker supports, wrote, "It's at this moment—when the hopes of so many ordinary people are rising—that our general secretary and her closest supporters tell us we should put off any attempt to fight until the spring or even later."

●WORKERS AT the Hugh Baird College in Merseyside have voted to strike after they were offered just a 1 percent pay rise.

An impressive 94 percent of UCU union members voted yes to strikes, and 98 percent voted for action short of a strike on a 74 percent turnout.

SCHOOLS

Walkouts and wins in London schools

TEACHERS AND support staff at Holland Park School in west London have struck for eight days against bosses' academisation plans.

The NEU union members oppose the selection of United Learning as the only multi-academy trust for the school to be absorbed into.

They are also angry at performance related pay, and at changes to teaching assistant contracts that could amount to fire and rehire. Strikers protested outside the Department for Education in central London last week.

●STRIKES AT Our Lady and St. George Primary school, in Walthamstow, east London, have been suspended as the teachers have beat back restructuring plans.

FIGHT TO DEFEND ABORTION RIGHTS

by SARAH BATES

THE US Supreme Court's decision last Friday to tear up federal abortion law marked a dangerous new phase for a woman's right to choose.

It overturned the Roe v Wade case, which granted access to abortion for over 50 years, leaving it up to individual states to decide if women can access abortions. In some, it's already been made illegal.

Within hours of the ruling there were over 100 protests across the US, with some viciously attacked by cops.

In Eugene, Oregon, protesters gathered for a "night of rage", meeting at a family planning clinic.

They "threw smoke bombs at officers along with several filled water bottles," while cops threw pepper spray projectiles at them. Police arrested ten people.

Early last Saturday morning in Longmont, Colorado, the offices of Life Choices—an anti-choice Christian organisation—were set on fire.

Spray painted on the building was, "If abortions aren't safe neither are you"



PROTESTERS IN New York City after the ruling last Friday

PICTURE: ALAMY

and "Bans off our bodies". At a rally in Phoenix, Arizona, police deployed tear gas without warning.

Opinion polls consistently show there is a pro-choice majority in the US. A YouGov poll the week before the decision showed just 37

percent of people agreed with overturning Roe v Wade.

President Joe Biden blasted the decision, calling it "a realisation of an extreme ideology and a tragic error by the Supreme Court". And Democratic Senator Elizabeth Warren argued Democrats

should be "focused like a laser on the election in November".

There will be legal challenges to the Supreme Court's decision. These are important. But elections and legal cases alone are not enough to grant women the right to choose. These have

to come alongside a wider movement demanding justice for women.

Women's lives depend on victory. A tsunami of rage must crash down on every anti-choice bigot who thinks they have a say over women's bodies.

Protesters rage in Britain

IN BRITAIN last Friday, Abortion Rights UK called a protest outside the US embassy in south London.

At least 250 angry protesters sent solidarity to those fighting back in the US, but were determined to defend abortion rights here as well.

Protester Jane told Socialist Worker she was "disgusted" by the ruling.

"We know women are going to die, just like they have in Malta, Ireland and Poland," she said. "The Tories will want to use this as a slippery slope."

Jane thinks that the actions of former president Donald Trump and the wealth of anti-choicers are to blame.

She added, "They don't want women to have consequence-free sex."

"We need to raise awareness and not take the rights we have for granted," she said.

Protesters chanted, "Pro-life, that's a lie. You don't care if women die," and "Not the church, not the state. Women will decide their fate."

Bigots plan to scrap even more rights after the ruling

RIPPING UP Roe v Wade was never going to be enough for the right. Reactionaries have been emboldened and want to go further.

South Dakota's governor Kristi Noem said the state would enforce a ban on telemedicine abortions. This would stop women accessing abortion pills that are federally authorised.

But US Attorney General Merrick Garland said last Friday that "states may not ban" the drugs.

And conservative justice Clarence Thomas wrote that the Supreme Court should overturn

more previous rulings.

He specifically said the court should now attack the right to contraception, the right to same sex intimacy and the right to same sex marriage.

Jude Barnhart, who identifies as transgender and non-binary, spoke at a protest in Washington.

"They're not going to stop regulating our bodies. They are going to regulate who is in our beds."

"They are going to regulate who we marry. They are going to regulate what we can put in our body to prevent ourselves from getting pregnant."



Rally outside US embassy in London

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

Women face prospect of despair and death

CLINICS WERE forced to shut their doors immediately after the announcement.

There were heartbreaking scenes as women, just minutes from having abortions, were forced to leave waiting rooms.

Some now live many thousands of miles from where they are able access abortion.

Some will return to the backstreets.

Some will die.

One woman at Houston Women's Clinic in Texas

was turned away while waiting to see a doctor.

She returned in a desperate attempt for help.

"I can't keep the child, I already have three," she said.

Just five weeks into her pregnancy, she had been informed of a man by a friend who could go to her home to perform an abortion.

"She told me that, if things didn't work out at the clinic, I could always call him".